

November 13, 2006

REFUGEE WORKING GROUP
Salt Lake County Council Chambers
2001 S State, North Building, Room 1100
Salt Lake City, UT

The meeting was called to order at 4:42 p.m.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

On behalf of Governor Jon Huntsman and Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon, Tani Pack Downing, Executive Director, Department of Workforce Services (DWS), welcomed those in attendance at the Refugee Working Group meeting. Tani stressed that the purpose of the Working Group is to help find solutions to current gaps in Utah's refugee system. Palmer DePaulis, Facilitator of the Working Group, was introduced.

Palmer DePaulis thanked the attendees for participating in the process. Mr. DePaulis explained the agenda and how this evening's meeting would be conducted. His goal is for the PowerPoint presentation to last approximately 1½ hours. A hardcopy of the presentation slides were handed out. Mr. DePaulis encouraged the meeting participants to note any questions they may have during the presentation on the handout. After the presentation is complete there will be a question and answer period. Mr. DePaulis indicated he is not an expert on refugee service issues and will rely on those in attendance who have the expertise needed to help answer any questions.

This evening's presentation is structured to ensure all attendees are "on the same page" with regard to the current Refugee Resettlement Program. The information presented this evening will be posted on the Refugee Working Group website for future reference. The presentation will focus on the State's current refugee system. If any questions are asked that we cannot answer this evening, Rebecca Sanchez from Mayor Corroon's office, will make note of them and answers will be prepared and addressed separately. After the presentation and the question and answer period, the agenda for the December meeting will be discussed.

Slideshow Presentation

Introduction to the Refugee Resettlement Program

- Who is a Refugee- defined – From the Immigration and Naturalization Act Section 101.
- Who is an Asylee – defined
- Why are Refugees here – example from a civil war in a country
 - Internally Displaced Persons
 - Refugees in Countries of First Asylum
 - Temporary Protection
 - Cannot Repatriate (return home)
 - Third Country Resettlement – cannot go back to their country of origin
- What is an Immigrant – defined

- Where do refugees come from? Mr. DePaulis explained a graph indicating refugees arriving in Utah, where they arrived from and the trends of influx. Based on various events.
- Explained about Myanmar refugees that we expect to see coming into the state shortly. Karen Burmese are being allowed to depart Thailand under a resettlement plan.
- Utah's Refugee demographics – 1995 to 2005 were outlined
- Diversity of Refugees in Utah was explained.
- What do refugees bring to Utah? Need to educate the general public – most important is hard work, productive residents of states, cities and towns. Most become gainfully employed within 6 months of arrival. Global community in our city and state.
- Prominent Refugees – enumerated
- Refugee Resettlement in the United States
- U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program in the United States
 - Refugee Act of 1980 – authorizes services, assistance, and work in the U.S.; eligible for Federal assistance programs immediately.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – Money flows to the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Health and Human Services.
 - There are Ten Voluntary Agencies who work with the Department of State.
- Little coordination between federal departments with no agency leading
 - 1951 Refugee Convention – Identifies those at risk, and leads international effort to protect those refugees.
- The Department of State works with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
 - Responsible for overseas operations, provides for Reception and Placement Services, and organizes the arrival and initial resettlement of refugees through the national voluntary agencies.
- The Department of Homeland Security
 - Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Refugee Corps., and Coordination of security background checks.
- Voluntary Agencies – 10 National Voluntary Agencies approved.
 - Cooperative Agreement – Operational Guidance
- Health and Human Services
 - Office of Refugee Resettlement

Utah's Refugee Resettlement System

- Utah Resettlement Agencies – How a refugee is placed.
- Resettlement Agency Responsibilities
 - Operational Guidance
 - Reception and Placement
 - Core Services
 - Responsible for Resettlement Outcomes

- Core Services
 - Reception Services
 - Housing and Utility connection
 - Food available on arrival plus one day's worth of additional supplies
 - Housing
 - Safety
 - Furnishings
 - Kitchen Items
 - Linens and other household supplies
 - Cleaning supplies
 - Toiletries
 - Clothing
 - Intake Interview, etc.

Mr. DePaulis outlined the time frames that should be met for the core services provided by the Resettlement Agencies.

- Health Department
 - Refugee Health Program
 - Pandemic Planning
- DWS Services
 - Cash Assistance
 - Food Stamps
 - Medical Assistance Eligibility
 - Childcare
 - Case Management
 - Employment Services
 - Training Services
 - Youth Services
 - Unemployment Insurance
 - Community Resource Information
- Other Services impacted by the refugee population
 - Public Education
 - Human Services
 - Mental Health Services
 - Public Safety
- Community and Culture
 - Office of Ethnic Affairs
 - Arts Council
- Salt Lake County
 - Community Resource Development
 - Aging Services
- Impacts to Cities
 - Salt Lake City
 - South Salt Lake City

Additional information may be found on the Refugee Working Group web site at www.jobs.utah.gov/refugeeworkinggroup

Question and Answer Period

John C. Erlacher, Salt Lake City Schools, asked for the website address.
www.jobs.utah.gov/refugeeworkinggroup

Noor Ul-Hasan stated she receives different information from families and from agencies regarding cash assistance given/received.

Elissa McConkie, International Rescue Committee (IRC), answered the question on cash assistance.

Kent Murdock, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS Church), stated that resettlement agencies in Utah are overwhelmed. Because they lack adequate funding they do fall short of the requirements.

Aden Batar, Catholic Community Services (CCS), indicated the standards of core services are met in the state. CCS collects donations from the community.

Buba Roth, Utah Consortium of Multicultural Groups (UCMG), reported that the Associations use their own funds and volunteers to help out those in their communities.

Amy Wiley, LDS Inner City Project, asked how many vouchers are received from Deseret Industries each year. Aden Batar, CCS, answered that between \$7,000 - \$10,000, and some furniture is received annually. Miro Marinovich, IRC, indicated that IRC receives \$6,000 for clothing and \$3,800 annually for food. These vouchers are to be used in the initial set up of refugees.

Garth Mangum, LDS Inner City Project, asked at what point the Asian Association of Utah (Asian Association) becomes involved with the refugee population. Norm Nakamura, Department of Workforce Services (DWS), answered that the Asian Association picks up after the initial set up is complete. There is a Targeted Grant sent out for bid. The Asian Association is the current grant holder and is a sub-grantee of Salt Lake County. The U.S. Government identifies highly impacted areas that are eligible to apply for grant money. Salt Lake County has been identified as an area with a need for a center for employment beyond six months. This Salt Lake County grant is renewed every three years and is currently in the 2nd year of the particular 3-year grant.

Shu Cheng, Asian Association, indicated that through a Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) the Asian Association places approximately 450 refugees per year in employment. Their program also provides social services and visits with the families. There are various problems such as transportation, tools for jobs, uniforms, etc. TAG provides labor in servicing clients and direct assistance with issues. The Asian Association lines refugees up with mental health services if that is an issue. School Districts also provide many services and help refugee families deal with day-to-day problems, sometimes crosses into social adjustment issues – law enforcement, etc. The School Districts work very closely with resettlement agencies.

Buba Roth, UCMG, thanked Mr. DePaulis for the presentation. She relayed that the Refugee Center in the Asian Association was started by the Consortium. The process used to set up the Asian Association's Refugee Center was explained. Refugees leaders are working on how to evaluate the current program.

Mr. DePaulis stated that part of the job of the Refugee Working Group is to thoroughly look at how we address the already listed gaps, not start all over in the process. There have already been three public hearings and we have a lot of information about the gaps before us. The Working Group will prioritize those gaps so we have the highest priority of where to focus the Governor's and Mayor's attention. We do not want to go back and look at where we've been but look forward as to prioritization.

Norm Nakamura, DWS, explained how the process of where refugees are placed works. The Department of State works through 10 Voluntary Agencies (VolAgs) who have national networks in New York. These VolAgs attend an allocation meeting with the Department of State. The Department of State indicates they have a certain number of refugees ready to come to the US. Applications are disseminated, and each VolAg looks into their networks to identify family members already in an area, etc. If there is no existing family (free cases) they look at their network and identify communities and capacity for housing, employment, etc. One of the VolAgs takes the case, travel papers are made, and the local VolAg is notified when the inbound refugees will be arriving in their state.

Palmer DePaulis indicated there are probably some mistakes made in the process.

A question was asked regarding the fact that the refugees from Europe almost double in numbers those from Africa even though there is more conflict in Africa than in Europe. How is this determined? Norm Nakamura, DWS, responded that the determination of different populations is set out in the Refugee Act of 1980. The President and the Secretary of State establish groups to be resettled. What has happened is the African population of refugees coming into the United States is growing.

Kent Murdock, LDS Church, suggested that the agenda for the next meeting include smaller groups who are trying to help the refugee population and the need for more mentors. All these agencies are making efforts to help refugees; it would be very helpful for all of the groups to coordinate with each other.

Laura Durrant, Asian Association, suggested that a training process be implemented so people who are coming into the system know all the gaps. A unified training program would be of great assistance.

Miro Marinovich, IRC, agreed there is a need to coordinate services; however resources to coordinate are lacking.

Saran Nahas, Happy Kids Daycare, asked a question regarding payment for childcare services when the parents work and school schedules exceed eight hours a day. She indicated that resources are not available.

Closing Comments and Topics for the Next Meeting

Palmer DePaulis indicated that before the next meeting the gaps already identified will be listed on the Refugee Working Group website.

In December, one of the leading people on refugee programs in the country, Ed Silverman from Illinois, will be in attendance.

In preparation for the next meeting, Mr. DePaulis asked the attendees to review the financial information – where does the money reside – diagram outlined in the presentation that will be on the website. He hopes to utilize Mr. Silverman's expertise in capacity building, prioritizing identified gaps, and how to make recommendations to the Governor and the Mayor. It is anticipated that Mr. Silverman will help position us to begin the process of prioritizing the gaps to lead up to the solutions. The Refugee Working Group needs to be fairly specific with regard to what recommendations are made, both monetarily and in regard to capacity building.

Mr. DePaulis thanked everyone in attendance for their patience and questions.